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RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 6882
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: ROCK AND A HARD PLACE - JAPAN'S TICAD DILEMMA

REF: A. TOKYO 286

[1](#)B. TOKYO 93
[1](#)C. TOKYO 100

Classified By: CDA Joseph R. Donovan Reasons 1.4(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. South African diplomats here report Japan would have "serious diplomatic problems" had Japan not invited Zimbabwe President Mugabe to attend the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV). According to them, the U.S. can do little to prevent him from coming. Embassy Tokyo's exchanges with Japanese officials lead us to suspect as well Japan will not withdraw its invitation. If that is the case, it might be useful to start pressing Japan on how it will address the role of good governance in development at TICAD in light of Mugabe's participation. End summary.

African Solidarity Led to Mugabe TICAD Invitation

[1](#)2. (C) Japan would have had "serious diplomatic problems" with African governments had the GOJ not invited Zimbabwean President Mugabe to attend TICAD IV May 28-30, according to South African Embassy political counsellor Nelia Barnard. While many do not agree with what Mugabe is doing in Zimbabwe, Africans follow the "African way" and will not criticize him publicly. Instead, Barnard told econoff, Africans prefer to treat Mugabe like "an errant little brother by keeping him in the fold and leading by example."

[1](#)3. (C) The U.S. stance toward Zimbabwe is well known, Barnard said, but the U.S. can do little to prevent Mugabe from attending TICAD. "Even the British had to back down" and let Mugabe attend the December 2007 EU-Africa Business Summit in Portugal, she noted. Barnard does not know whether Mugabe has accepted Japan's invitation, but said Zimbabwe's Ambassador to Japan had recently inquired about potential first ladies' events.

Africans Disappointed with Fuzzy TICAD Draft Statement

[1](#)4. (C) The Japanese foreign ministry on January 25 shared with African representatives in Tokyo a first draft of the proposed leaders statement that would be issued after TICAD. According to Barnard, the Africans were disappointed with its

lack of detail. She suspects Japan is keeping some proposals for Africa under wraps so they can be announced with great fanfare at the conference. While South Africa gets little development funding from Japan, other African countries rely quite heavily on Japanese aid and are anxious to know how much they will receive. The African Diplomatic Corps' TICAD planning committee, headed by Zimbabwe Ambassador Stuart Comberbach, plans to submit a counter-proposal to the Japanese draft statement in the next couple of weeks, Barnard said.

Japanese Aid More Rigorous Than Chinese Assistance

¶5. (C) Barnard agreed that China's aggressive diplomacy in Africa has caused Japan to step up its efforts on the continent. She maintained China disburses aid with few strings attached, while Japan's aid policies are more like "tough love" in that monies are usually designated for specific projects and, in the case of yen loans, have specific payback periods. African governments are less fond of the Japanese approach because it requires more discipline.

¶6. (C) Comment. In our continued discussions with Japanese officials, we see no sign of Tokyo disinviting Mugabe. That said, Japan has been quick to complain about China not following the DAC rules on foreign assistance or accepting the consensus worked out in the G-8 and elsewhere on the key role governance needs to play in a successful development program. It may be time for us to start working Japanese officials here and when they visit D.C. on how they plan to press the importance of good governance at TICAD with Mugabe in the room. End comment.
DONOVAN